(10) 12 per cent interest should be charged on the decree amount, or the rate of interest agreed upon by the parties.

(11) Judgment should be delivered not later than two or three days after hearing a case.

(12) Arrangements should be made for the prompt return of account books of local merchants examined on commission in respect of suits filed in British Indian Courts.

(13) A separate judge should be appointed for the inspection of subordinate courts when the latter were actually at work.

(14) Orders should be issued for 50 rupees court-fee stamp papers being sold to stamp-vendors.

Dewan's reply.—Your representation will be referred to the High Court for consideration.

37. Village Panchayat Courts in Travancore : their working.

Mr. K. M. Mamman Mappillai (Member, Municipal Council, Tiruvalla), after thanking the Government for the announcement in regard to the admission of Christians into the Revenue Department, represented that the benefits expected from the establishment of Village Panchayat Courts were not realised, that the jurisdiction of the Village Panchayat Courts should be co-extensive with that of the civil courts, that the Sections of the Village Panchayat Regulation were being interpreted in different ways by the Panchayat Courts and that there were no fixed court fees for suits allowed to be filed in the Village Panchayat Courts. He also suggested that at least in regard to uncontested suits the quorum should be reduced to two judges, that the remuneration to copyists in the Village Panchayat Courts as per the piece-work system would come to only Rs. 2 or Rs. 1½, and that since there was only one clerk for each court and when he was absent, no work could be transacted, it would be well to appoint a paid copyist whose services could be utilised when the clerk was absent. He added that the judges of the Village Panchayat Courts should be men of position and status even if the selection was made on a communal basis and that in matters of execution those courts should be given greater powers, they being at present empowered to attach movables alone.

Dewan's reply.—The most important point you have touched upon is the need for a manual of instructions in regard to the interpretation to be put on the several Sections of the Village Panchayat Regulation. I shall request the High Court to pay early attention to it. In regard to the valuation of the suits to be instituted in these Courts, the provision in the Regulation is, I think, clear enough. What is prescribed is 5/100 of the value of the suit. I do not think that there can be any doubt with regard to it. I shall, however, issue instructions to make it clear.

The question of reducing the quorum in the Village Panchayat Courts will also be referred to the High Court. The question of extending the jurisdiction of existing courts and the creation of new courts will also be taken up.

In regard to communal representation, there is no inflexible rule. We do take into consideration the qualifications and the status of the gentlemen appointed as judges, in addition to the community to which they belong.

Then you refer to the need for paid copyists for the Village Panchayat Courts. The High Court have evidently abolished paid copyists in these courts to effect economy, because, as you yourself admit, the income that these copyists earn does not exceed Rs. 2 a month per head. You apparently want to make out that there is necessity for two clerks in each court. If there are two clerks, the copyist's work can be distributed between them. It involves additional expenditure and it will perhaps become necessary when the jurisdiction of the courts is extended and they are entrusted with criminal work also. The High Court will be consulted.

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